10: Marshall M-5 (ca. 1910) 1945 AP1 Burma
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391 roomy so that a man could squat down and pull his knees up inside the garment. Sometimes it was folded around the loins as its wearer squatted on the ground or mat. On cold mornings extra warmth was obtained by wrapping a blanket round the body, either a thick one of the same hand-woven cotton, or one of wool bought from some bazaar.

In the Toungoo Hills, the Bwè and other tribes usually wore a shorter smock, with all kinds and variations of stripes, which would hardly reach to their knees. They covered their legs with baggy Shan "bombies" or pants, usually black in colour.

291 For a number of years the Karens on the plains and
177 in the towns have worn the usual Burmese dress consisting of a *longyi* (skirt) with a white jacket in the warm weather and dark thick imported clothing in the cold.

562 The usual dress for the women has been the *longyi*,
391 worn over the lower part of the body and a shorter *hsay*
286 or smock over the upper part. The former was woven by the women themselves but the latter was often of imported cloth, usually black. Sometimes black velvet was used for the smock. Among the Sgaws the finest smocks were made of homespun black or dark blue cloth and were trimmed with rows of Job's Tears, the white seeds that grow readily in their plantations. Otherwise, bits of blue or red ribbon or strips of cloth were used for
301 ornaments. Often many strings of beads were wrapped
751 about the neck, some of which were supposed to have magical value to ward off evil spirits.

● 586 The women of the villages near Thandaung among
291 the Bwès, or Mopghas as they call themselves, wove very
178 elaborate skirts in which a number of colours were beauti-

[462]

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586 291 178 fully blended together, but the weaving of these skirts was almost a lost art at the time of the invasion.

291 855 562 Little children were wrapped in blankets or in garments that were cast off by their elders. When romping boys began to run around they did not bother with clothes until they were five or six, or even older. Little girls usually began to wrap a small *longyi* about their waists at three or four. Elders often went about with scant loin cloths, but very seldom did they appear without any clothing.

291 177 With the rise of national self-consciousness, the Karens tried an adaptation of their national dress and, finding the old smock ill-adapted to modern conditions, they invented a jacket cut after the style of the ordinary European lounge jacket made of the native cloth and embroidered with some of the designs of the original smocks. There were many patterns of these and they became very popular among the younger men in the cities and towns and among older boys in schools. They were a sort of blazer such as is worn in schools in Europe or [562] America. A few Karens adopted the European style of men's dress, but few women in the cities wore anything except the usual Burmese costume.

291 184 562 773 Among the Bwès and Pakus, another tribe near Toungoo, the women all wore skirts of an identical pattern. This had a black ground with two or three narrow horizontal stripes at about the height of the knees. But among the Sgaws there was a large number of patterns. The most common was a conventional design of horizontal stripes of various shades of red and in the middle a "python skin" in clouded pattern. This commemorates the old myth of the woman who was stolen by the

19: Marshall M-5 (ca. 1910) 1922 AP1 Burma
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585 tomary to sprinkle the bridal floor with rice to give the pair a fruitful married life. Possibly the showering of rice on newly married couples in the West had originally a similar significance. However, I have been told that in the olden times couples often refrained from living together for months or even a year or two after their marriage.

585 784 787 Many tabus were formerly observed by parties going to a wedding. If they heard of a death, passed a funeral, or came into contact with anything connected with a burial, the intermediary at once halted his companions and directed them to recall their "k'laa." If a snake crossed their path, he stopped them and addressed the reptile: "You follow your path, and we will follow ours. Our way is short and pleasant. Yours is long and evil." If they happened to hear the call of the red-headed woodpecker, which is considered a bird of ill-omen, he would cry out: "You may be sick and die. It is nothing to us. Let the white ginger burn you." If they came upon a dead wild animal, the intermediary reminded the company that death, having taken its victim, would not touch them. Chancing to meet another wedding party, the two groups exchanged the greeting: "May you be free from all evil, and may you have peace." If either company had liquor with them, they all drank together.

Certain tabus made it necessary for the whole party to sit down where they were and wait until they believed the danger was past. They did this when they heard the call of the plover, the cry of the barking-deer, the "tauke te" of the lizard, or the scream of the woodpecker. When about to renew their journey after an interruption of this kind, they pretended to spit something out of their mouths, saying: "Let all evil remain on you." A sneeze would halt the entire retinue until the leader was assured that no more sneezes were to follow.

585 591 According to modern usage the groom is supposed to remain in his wife's house three, seven, or any other number of days required by her parents. After the specified interval has elapsed, he is free to go about as he pleases; but he seldom returns to his own village, except for a brief visit. The general custom is for the husband to settle down with his parents-in-law, a practice that looks much like a survival from the matriarchal stage of the Karen's past.

586 Should the marriage prove unsatisfactory to the wife or her parents and they wish to sever the connection, they must purchase their release by paying the husband an ox or one hundred rupees.

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586 In case the young man is dissatisfied with the union he has formed, the price to be paid by him is much larger, namely, three hundred rupees, one change of clothing, bracelets, earrings, and other jewelry. Because the man and his parents have the initiative and exercise the right of choice in effecting a marriage, the justice of the above arrangement is obvious.

684 I have been repeatedly assured that in the early days, when the Karen people lived unto themselves, moral lapses were uncommon among them, and that the lot of young persons found to be holding improper relations with each other was a hard one. Their sin was regarded not only as an offense against their household gods, the "Bgha," but also a crime against the community, inasmuch as it was supposed to cause sterility of the earth and, hence, loss of crops. The sinful ones were brought before the elders, who, having eaten two fowls that were cooked whole for them, required the couple to sacrifice a large animal, that is, a buffalo, an ox, a pig, or a goat. The blood of the slain creature was sprinkled on the ground "to cool it off" or, in other words, to remove the curse that rested upon it. The elders then resorted to extreme methods to shame the offenders, who were driven from the village, sometimes after having been stripped naked. As they were not allowed to mingle with the rest of the inhabitants perhaps for several years, they either went to some distant village to live, or built themselves a hut in the jungle.[11]

[11] On the subject of adultery and its relation to divorce among the Karen, see p. 168.